



# **COVID-19 RHODES UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL FOR STAFF AND VISITORS TO THE UNIVERSITY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

On April 23 2020, the President announced that South Africa would be at level four of lockdown as from 1 May 2020. In this regard he stated that ‘a gradual and phased return of economic recovery’ through the implementation of a risk adjusted strategy would be introduced. Further, this strategy considers a ‘deliberate and cautious approach to the easing of current lockdown restrictions’. In line with the President’s announcement and the consequent legislative requirements as regulated under the National State of Disaster, Rhodes University has considered a health and safety protocol to protect our staff during this period. The protocol enables the requirement as stated by the President, of ‘disease surveillance and prevention of the spread of infection’.

Rhodes University’s top priority is the health and safety of all our staff as we endeavour to ensure academic and related business continuity within the national COVID-19 parameters. It is not in the best interests of the University that all staff return to the workplace nor is it permitted until Alert level 1. As many staff as possible should stay away from campus for as long as possible. Staff who are able to work remotely should continue to do so.

However, staff who are neither vulnerable staff nor have well-known or disclosed health issues nor carry comorbidities nor have any condition or circumstances which may place them at higher risk of complications should they contract Covid-19 nor staff who are 60 years or older are required to be on campus for a prescribed limited period of time in order to assist as we gradually bring our campus back to life are expected to honour their contractual obligation to the University even if this means doing work that is different to the work they normally do and/or to work in a way that is different to the way they are used to working. In doing so, adherence to all the health and safety protocols must be observed at all times. Refusing to adhere to a lawful and reasonable request is a disciplinary offense and will be dealt with in line with our Disciplinary Code and processes.

## **PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL**

To outline the health and safety protocols that must be adhered to by staff and visitors to Rhodes University during the lockdown period.

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the following: -

- RU COVID-19 Institutional Framework
- RU COVID-19 Institutional Plan
- RU COVID-19 Risk Assessment
- RU COVID-19 HR Leave Protocol
- RU COVID-19 Access Protocol

## **TERMINOLOGY**

### **Access Points**

The entry points onto campus.

There are 5 access points for entry onto campus and they are: -

1. Prince Alfred Street (PA) 07h00 until 16h00;
2. Lucas Avenue 07h00 until 16h00;
3. The Arch 07h00 until 17h00;
4. South Street 07h00 to 17h00; and
5. CPU (for shift staff, and those who come to campus outside the hours that the access points above are open.

All staff and visitors will be required to proceed through the access points when they want to enter the workplace. Staff and visitors will not be permitted into the workplace unless they have come through one of the access points and been given a dated access permit for the day. This will only be done once the Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire has been completed and handed in at the Access Point.

Staff who live on campus (for example Wardens) will be issued a letter and will not be required to complete the Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire unless they are going to the workplace.

### **Access to workplace**

Access to the campus and workplace.

### **Comorbidity**

Comorbidity refers to an overlap of different conditions and, medically, when conditions are comorbid they impact one another even though their causes may be unrelated. The condition may also be a behavioural or mental disorder.

### **COVID-19 Coordinator**

The person responsible in each department or division for checking that staff have a dated access permit for the day, are wearing a mask and to register their presence in the workplace.

### **COVID-19 Manager**

As per the Gazette issued by the Department of Employment and Labour each Institution is required to appoint a COVID-19 Manager. Rhodes University's designated COVID-19 Manager is the Acting HR Director. Any concerns should be directed to the Acting Director who will attend to them. Large Academic Departments and Divisions may designate a person should they wish to do so who is responsible for collating any staff concerns or questions for feedback to the Acting HR Director.

### **COVID-19 Induction Training**

Training that all staff will receive as part of the Initial risk assessment process. The training covers the hygiene, health and safety protocols required in the work place.

### **Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questions**

A set of questions that staff are required to answer on a daily basis and submit at the access point when they enter the campus. The questionnaire will be on the HR website as well as at the Access

Points to allow staff to complete them at home rather than at the access point. The HIGHER HEALTH Integrated Digital COVID-19 Screening System (“Health Check”) may also be used.

### **Daily Screening**

The daily process whereby staff are required to access the workplace via one of the access points provided that they have completed their daily self-assessment screening questionnaire. The onus is on staff members to not to come to work if they have any of the listed COVID-19 symptoms and/or fall into the category of vulnerable staff. Once a dated access permit has been issued staff may proceed to the workplace.

### **Direct/Close Contact**

Direct/close contact means that you had face-to-face contact within 1 metre or were in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19. This contact happened while the person with COVID-19 was still “infectious”, i.e. from 2 days before to 10 days after their symptoms began. For example, you may be someone who: -

1. Lives in the same household as a person with COVID-19
2. Works closely in the same environment as a person with COVID-19
3. Sat in the same classroom as a person with COVID-19
4. Attended the same gathering as a person with COVID-19
5. Provided direct care for a person with COVID-19 in a healthcare setting without using the proper personal protective equipment
6. Sat within two seats (1 metre) in any direction of a person with COVID-19 case in any kind of vehicle including buses, minibus taxis, etc.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Protective clothing and equipment designed to protect the wearer from injury or infection.

### **Risk Assessment Process and Form**

All staff members must be screened by the Health Care Centre and receive the COVID-19 Induction Training which is part of the Initial risk assessment process. Staff may also complete the Risk Assessment Form and submit their form to the Health Care Centre and confirmation that they have watched the COVID-19 Induction Training Video. The Health Care will add the staff member to the training register when they have completed the training. The Risk Assessment Form is available on the HR website and at the Health Care Centre.

### **Risk Self-Assessment Form**

A form that is completed by staff and submitted to the Health Care Centre as part of the Initial risk assessment process. The form will be available at the Health Care Centre and on the HR website.

### **Social/Physical Distancing**

Social/physical distancing is the practice of maintaining a greater than usual physical distance from other people or of avoiding direct physical contact with people or objects in public places during the outbreak of a contagious disease in order to minimise exposure and reduce transmission of infection. In the case of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), a minimum distance of radius 1m is recommended.

### **Vulnerable people and people living with comorbidities**

People who have pre-existing health conditions related to their immune systems, i.e. they are already immunocompromised (as defined by the World Health Organization Report of 2019).

## **THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCESS FOR STAFF AND VISITORS COMING TO CAMPUS AND THE WORKPLACE.**

For staff required and permitted to be at the workplace the University is responsible for: -

1. The Institutional Plan which will indicate which staff are required and permitted to be at the workplace.
2. Communicating the list of specific staff required and permitted to be at the workplace to HoDs and Directors. The list may vary from level to level and as circumstances change.
3. Determining which staff will be issued with a letter permitting them to travel to and from home for work and that they are permitted to work if this is required under a specific alert and risk level.
4. Providing access points to the campus and workplace.
5. Requiring staff to present themselves on a daily basis at any one of the Access Points and ensuring that they submit their Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire and have a letter stating that they are permitted to work.
6. Granting staff who can be permitted to access the workplace a dated access permit.
7. Screening visitors'/service providers who present themselves at any of the Access Points and who are permitted to deliver essential/critical services and/or goods with a Daily Self-Assessment Questionnaire which each individual will be required to complete and sign. Individuals permitted to access the campus will be given a dated access permit allowing them to deliver essential/critical services and/or goods.
8. Ensuring that staff and visitors who are permitted to enter the workplace are wearing a mask.
9. Ensuring that Departments and Divisions who have essential services staff working at the workplace register staff attendance on a daily basis and that staff have a dated access permit.
10. Ensuring Departments and Divisions Attendance registers are emailed on a weekly basis to Mokete Moerane ([m.moerane@ru.ac.za](mailto:m.moerane@ru.ac.za)).
11. Ensuring that all the Daily Self-Assessment Questionnaires are delivered on a daily basis to CPU and collected by HR for record keeping.
12. The provision of the requisite PPE, where necessary.
13. Arranging the necessary disinfecting and sanitizing of the workplace at material times.
14. Deploying the requisite type of hand sanitizer at readily available points of the workplace and at the access points.
15. Working with HoDs and Directors to ensure that, as far as is practical, the number of staff at the workplace at any given time will be minimised through rotation, staggered working hours, remote working arrangements or similar measures in order to achieve social/physical distancing.
16. Ensuring that the workplace is properly ventilated.
17. Liaising with the Department of Health should any staff member be diagnosed with COVID-19 following an assessment at the Health Care Centre in order to provide contact-tracing support.
18. Informing the Department of Employment and Labour that a staff member or members have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
19. Reminding staff that it is a disciplinary offense to disregard the University regulations.

Staff accessing the workplace are responsible for: -

1. Ensuring that they do the Initial Risk Assessment either at the Health Care Centre or on a self-assessment basis. Risk Assessments done on a self-assessment basis must be emailed to the Health Care Centre.
2. Attending the COVID-19 Induction training provided by the Health Care Centre and/or listening to the online COVID-19 training on the website.

3. Ensuring that they wear a mask at all times, practice social/physical distancing by ensuring a minimum 1.5-meter radius distance between themselves and others. This includes ensuring that there is minimal physical contact between themselves and others. This includes keeping face-to-face events and meetings to a minimum and ensuring that the necessary permission is sought for face-to-face meeting/activities.
4. Presenting themselves at any one of the Access Points on a daily basis for daily screening and submitting their Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire.
5. Presenting themselves at CPU and submitting their Daily Self-Assessment Questionnaire at CPU if they work shifts, are called out on an emergency or are staff who are permitted to be on campus after hours.
6. Staying at home on sick leave if they have any of the symptoms present on the Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire. In such instances the staff member should advise their Line Manager that they are not able to be at work as per the Support Staff Leave Policy.
7. Not sharing eating or drinking utensils.
8. Dropping off their refuse in the marked bin in their vicinity.
9. Placing their mask in the designated bag for laundry if they are making use of the University's laundry services.
10. Ensuring that they travel to and from work in terms of the legislated travel protocol.
11. Reporting any actual or potential hazard at the workplace to HR so that steps can be taken to address it.
12. Reporting any recalcitrant staff member to HR so that steps can be taken to address the staff member(s) concerned.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- This protocol should be read in conjunction with the Rhodes Institutional Framework and HR COVID-19 Leave Protocol.
- Vulnerable staff should remain at their places of residence and, where possible, work remotely. A medical certificate confirming comorbidity will be required.
- This protocol and its processes remain in force for as long as the declaration of a national disaster published in the prevailing Government Gazette remains in force.

#### CONTACT LIST

Support Required	Contact Details
Campus Protection 24-hour Helpdesk	046 603 8146 /7
Communications and Advancement	v.mhlope@ru.ac.za
Cleaning Services (including refills for hand sanitizer)	<a href="mailto:c.langson@ru.ac.za">c.langson@ru.ac.za</a>
Faculties	Commerce – <a href="mailto:n.searle@ru.ac.za">n.searle@ru.ac.za</a> Education – <a href="mailto:s.asmal-motara@ru.ac.za">s.asmal-motara@ru.ac.za</a> Humanities – <a href="mailto:k.kouari@ru.ac.za">k.kouari@ru.ac.za</a> Law – <a href="mailto:a.comley@ru.ac.za">a.comley@ru.ac.za</a> Pharmacy – <a href="mailto:l.emslie@ru.ac.za">l.emslie@ru.ac.za</a> Science – <a href="mailto:l.klaas@ru.ac.za">l.klaas@ru.ac.za</a>

Support Required	Contact Details
Health and Safety Officer	<a href="mailto:t.fanisi@ru.ac.za">t.fanisi@ru.ac.za</a>
Health Care Centre	046 603 8523 (office hours)
Human Resources	<a href="mailto:z.dyibishe@ru.ac.za">z.dyibishe@ru.ac.za</a>
IT Support	support@ru.ac.za
Registrar	<a href="mailto:registrar@ru.ac.za">registrar@ru.ac.za</a> <a href="mailto:academicadmin@ru.ac.za">academicadmin@ru.ac.za</a> <a href="mailto:secretariat@ru.ac.za">secretariat@ru.ac.za</a>

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